

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—Wednesday, February 3, 1999

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Chaplain, Reverend James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

We are thankful, gracious God, that You give us a vision of a world where justice reigns and where mercy and peace and reconciliation abide. Yet, we know too that You have given us minds with which to think, eyes with which to see, hands with which to work and hearts with which to love. Encourage us and all of Your people, dear God, to use the abilities and gifts that You have given so that while we pray and hear Your word we also go about our communities doing those good works that honor You and serve people in their need. Bless us this day and every day, we pray. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Chair's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. GIBBONS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. GIBBONS led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

THE REPUBLICAN AGENDA FOR THE NEW CONGRESS

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, the Republican agenda for the new Congress includes a middle class tax relief package, education improvements, saving Social Security and reforming that worthy cause, and a more effective, more efficient military.

Our agenda includes across the board tax cuts which means that anyone who pays Federal income taxes will get a tax cut. It includes education, legislation which will put more money into the classroom and less money into the pockets of an education bureaucracy here in Washington. It will include bipartisan Social Security reform so that seniors are protected, the soon-to-retire will get the benefits they have been promised and younger workers will have a system there for them when they retire as well.

It will include funding for the construction of a national missile defense system so that America will be safe from rogue nations who apparently are not impressed in the least bit that we have an ABM treaty with the Soviet Union, a country which thanks to Ronald Reagan no longer exists. It is an agenda that benefits all Americans and it is an agenda that rewards hard work, protects seniors, better educates our children and keeps America safe.

SLOBODAN MILOSEVIC MUST NOT SUCCEED

(Mr. OLVER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. OLVER. Madam Speaker, the United States is right to take forceful leadership to stop the systematic destruction of homes and villages and the slaughter of civilians in Kosova that has been ordered by Slobodan Milosevic, the Communist dictator of rump Yugoslavia. But in that process the United States must not be party to one last sellout of the human rights of the people of Kosova in this 20th century.

Milosevic, who supervised the killing of hundreds of thousands of Croats and Bosnians and the creation of at least two million refugees by his attacks on two other United Nations members will now brazenly plead to that very United Nations his right to utterly subjugate or, if not, to kill or drive into exile the two million Kosovars who make up 90 percent of the population of Kosova.

Milosevic must not succeed. The time has come for the United States to

forcefully and unequivocally promote the ultimate right of self determination of the people of Kosova so they may live in peace and freedom in the 21st Century.

COMMONSENSE CONSERVATIVES TRUST THE PEOPLE TO INVEST IN THEIR OWN FUTURES

(Mr. HAYWORTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HAYWORTH. Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest a few days ago when the President of the United States came to this Chamber and outlined some 80 new programs in the span of 75 minutes, and, Madam Speaker, indeed I believe it comes down to a question of trust, because how interesting was the President's statement in subsequent days in Buffalo, New York?

Quoting the President now, Madam Speaker:

"We could give it," referring to the budget surplus, "We could give it," the budget surplus, "all back to you and hope you spend it right, but . . ."

Madam Speaker, that outlines a clear difference between the two major political parties. It is a question of who do we trust? Do we trust the government more to spend our money given the long history of wasteful Washington spending by this overgrown bureaucracy?

Madam Speaker, the majority party and the common-sense conservatives of this country trust the people. That is why we called for broad-based tax relief, so that all American families can save, spend and invest in their own future. It is a major difference. Indeed, Madam Speaker, it is a question of trust.

INTRODUCTION OF GIVE-FANS-A-CHANCE LEGISLATION

(Mr. BLUMENAUER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, one of the tenets of a livable community is control over one's own destiny. Unfortunately, sports franchises have held communities hostage, pitting one city against another as they have left fans in Brooklyn, Hartford, Baltimore, Houston and Cleveland for greener pastures. It does not have to be that way.

Madam Speaker, that is why I am introducing Give-Fans-a-Chance legislation which guarantees due process for

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

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relocation and makes it at least possible for any city to do what little Green Bay, Wisconsin, has done: basically own their own team. But the NFL will not let that happen any more.

Any league which does not abide by these rules does not deserve the Federal antitrust broadcast exemption worth billions of dollars.

Madam Speaker, I strongly urge giving fans a chance and making their communities a little more livable by providing them with the opportunity to control their own destiny not subject to the whim of some absentee billionaire.

ECONOMIC HEALTH AND NATIONAL SECURITY TIED TO STABILITY OF OUR DOMESTIC PETROLEUM INDUSTRY

(Mr. WATKINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WATKINS. Madam Speaker, I rise to address the House this morning to bring the attention to a grave matter, an economic crisis in the oil patch of this great Nation. I like for my colleagues to realize if there is not changes made within the next four months to five months, we will lose over 50 percent of our production for marginal wells in the United States of America. Marginal wells produce about 1.3 million barrels a day. How much is that? That is equivalent to what we import from the Arab countries.

But we are about to turn that market over to other foreign sources and put us more dependent, and rest assured, between now and July the 4th, when we have Independence Day, we will be more dependent on foreign governments than ever before in the history of our country. I do not think that is what we want.

Madam Speaker, I call on the Speaker to set up an energy task force, a crisis task force. Also we must have hearings this month, move on this, and also we must establish a national energy policy before our national security is totally at risk.

BRIDGE TO THE 21ST CENTURY MADE OUT OF BANANA PEELS

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Madam Speaker, our Trade Representative said, and I quote:

"We going to the mat."

The trade rep said they will ask the White House to impose strict tariffs and sanctions on European goods over bananas.

That is right, bananas. Think about it. While Uncle Sam is prepared to wage a trade war over bananas, 10,000

steelworkers, 10,000, are receiving unemployment compensation.

□ 1015

Your workers, my workers, standing in unemployment lines, losing their homes, losing their jobs, and the White House is roaring like a titmouse over bananas.

Beam me up, ladies and gentlemen. What has happened to this country? I yield back all the tanks, submarines, and certainly this new bridge to the 21st Century, that will be made now out of banana peels.

TAX CUTS—THE MAJOR DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS

(Mr. BALLENGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BALLENGER. Madam Speaker, it did not take long to find out what the major difference between Democrats and Republicans will be in this Congress: Tax cuts.

Republicans propose a 10 percent across-the-board tax cut, which the legislation of the gentleman from Ohio (Chairman KASICH) will do; and the Democrats, well, you guessed it, general tax relief is nowhere to be found. In fact, the President's budget will contain no middle class tax relief for another 15 years. And we all know what targeted tax cuts are. That is a euphemism for "you won't be getting one."

The current budget surplus, taxpayer overpayment, to be more accurate, should go back to the people that it belongs to in the first place, the taxpayers.

April 15 is not far away, and the tax man cometh. The tax man has been taking too much for too long, and then wasting too much of that for too long. It is time to give the middle class average taxpayers a break. It is time for a tax cut.

STRENGTHENING SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, the Republicans are beginning the 106th Congress exactly where they left off in the 105th, and that is ignoring the will of the majority of the Americans.

If you recall, the Republican leadership in the House ended the 105th Congress by approving an \$80 billion tax break for the wealthiest Americans financed by raiding the Social Security surplus. As a result, the Democrats picked up 5 seats in the November election.

But, believe it or not, the Republicans are still not listening. Instead of

directing the surplus to Social Security and Medicare, the Republicans are proposing a 10 percent tax cut which will do virtually nothing for 45 million American families. Under the Republican plan, the average annual tax cut for 60 percent of tax payers would be about \$100. Those earning more than \$300,000 though would receive an average tax cut of \$20,000.

I urge my Republican colleagues to listen to the American people. Read the writing on the wall and stop wasting time with a recycled plan to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy with money that should be used to strengthen Social Security and Medicare.

THE RETURN OF BIG GOVERNMENT

(Mr. EWING asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EWING. Madam Speaker, today we gather in this House, we have things pretty good; but sometimes when things are too rosy, we lose track of where we are headed, and maybe what we ought to be looking at.

The surplus is certainly something that we are glad to have, and I think that Members of this body who have supported good policy over the last few years can take credit for that.

But in the President's address, I think something that is so badly needed that was lacking was how are we going to pay off the debt? The President's address should be entitled, "The Return of Big Government." He declared the era of big government over just a couple of years ago, and now he is back with guns blazing: The return of big government.

We need to save Social Security, we need to reduce the debt, and we need to return to the American taxpayers some of the overpayment they are making.

PUTTING SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE FIRST

(Ms. STABENOW asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. STABENOW. Madam Speaker, I rise today to urge our Republican colleagues to join with us in putting Social Security and Medicare first. We have come together to balance the budget, and we now have an extraordinary opportunity to take the next step in fiscal responsibility and make sure that our children and our grandchildren are protected for the future.

We need to make sure that Social Security and Medicare are protected first, and then we as Democrats will join and in fact lead the fight for tax cuts for middle class families. But, first and foremost, we need to pay down the debt and protect Social Security and Medicare.